

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, PINT, IS

SUBJECT: NRP MEETING ENDS IN BRAWL

1. A MEETING OF THE NRP'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON SEPTEMBER 28 ENDED IN A BRAWL WHEN DELEGATES RESORTED TO BLOWS OVER A VOTE ONPOSTPONEMENT OF THE DATE OF INTERNAL PARTY ELECTIONS FOR DELEGATES TO THE PARTY CONVENTION. THE POLL BY SECRET BALLOT WAS JUST GETTING UNDERWAY WHEN SEVERAL DELEGATES WERE SPOTTED STUFFING THE BALLOT BOX. OTHERS GRABBED THE BALLOT BOX AND BROKE IT OPEN, AND THE MELEE BEGAN. THE VOTE WAS CANCELLED AND THE MEETING ENDED WITHOUT A DECISION ON THE ELECTION DATE.

2. THE TIMING OF THE ELECTION IS CRUCIAL BECAUSE THE YOUTH GROUP (LED BY SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER HAMMER AND MK YEHUDA BEN MEIR) IN THE FACTION-RIDDEN PARTY IS ANXIOUS TO LIBERALIZE MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS TO ENABLE THE ENROLLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS WHO WOULD PRESUMABLY SUPPORT IT. THE YOUTH FACTION HAS APPEALED TO THE PARTY COURT IN AN EFFORT TO RELAX RESTRICTIONS ON MEMBERSHIPS. A NEW MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

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WOULD REQUIRE TIME, WHICH EXPLAINS THEIR INSISTENCE ON

POSTPONING THE INTERNAL ELECTION. THE FACTION LED BY INTERIOR MINISTER BURG ALSO OPPOSES ELECTIONS AT THIS TIME. THE FACTION LED BY MINISTER OF RELIGION RAPHAEL IS JUST AS ADAMANT IN HAVING THE ELECTION NOW. AN ELECTION WITH THE EXISTING MEMBERSHIP WOULD PROBABLY RESULT IN GAINS FOR RAPHAEL'S FOLLOWING IN THE PARTY. RAPHAEL HAS SOLIDIFIED HIS HOLD ON A LARGE SEGMENT OF THE PRESENT NRP MEMBERSHIP THROUGH PATRONAGE BASED ON HIS CONTROL OF THE RELIGIOUS COUNCILS AS WELL AS HIS MINISTRY.

3. COMMENT: THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE DIFFERENT FACTIONS OF THE NRP, WHICH HAS A TOTAL OF TEN SEATS IN THE KNESSET, IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NRP IN ANY FUTURE COALITION GOVERNMENT. THE YOUTH FACTION, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH ITS STRONG TIES TO THE GUSH EMUNIM, TAKES AN UNCOMPROMISING STAND ON RETENTION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND WOULD BE EXPECTED TO SUPPORT NRP PARTICIPATION IN A GOVERNMENT LED BY THE LIKUD SHOULD THE LATTER EMERGE FROM NEXT YEAR'S NATIONAL ELECTION IN A POSITION TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT.

TOON

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